

5 Complete Kits for Your Short Sermon Series

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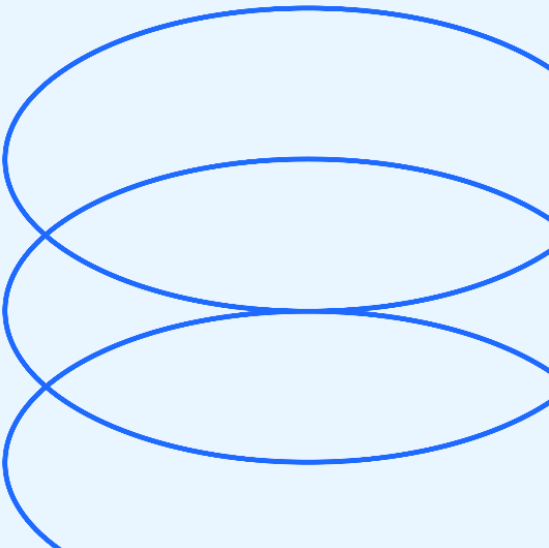
About the Author

[Matthew Boffey](#) (MDiv) is a licensed minister and served as a writer for Logos. He is an alumnus of the Chicago Plan, a biblical exposition and pastoral training program, and teaches and preaches regularly to students.

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Introduction



No matter how well you plan your sermon series, every once in a while, you find yourself needing to fill a gap in your preaching schedule—and fast.

And since that's usually in transitional periods when families are in and out of town, like around the holidays or over the summer, you need sermons that stand well on their own.

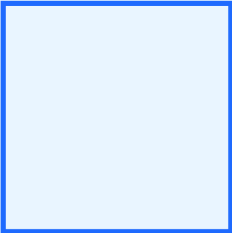
This guide features five such series. For each series you'll find:

- Relevant quotes and illustrations
- Tips for dividing your series
- Resources for further study

Whether you're planning a year ahead or scrambling for this week's sermon, you'll find what you need to get started.

So read on, choose a series, and have at it. Each sermon starter kit is yours to use totally free.

The Beatitudes



The famous “Blessed are the ...” words in Matthew 5 are the prelude to the most famous sermon ever recorded. Take your time with them during an eight-week series to challenge and strengthen your congregation.

Why this series?

First, the Beatitudes reset our hearts. None of us, not even Christians, are naturally inclined toward the Beatitudes. In fact, we are inclined toward the opposite. The Beatitudes offer a reality check for how to live as disciples of Jesus.

Second, each Beatitude stands well on its own. You can teach on verse 4, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted,” without needing to explain verse 3. Of course, general context is important, but the organization of the text makes it ideal for a weekly sermon on each Beatitude.

Third, they hold opportunities to preach topical sermons on important kingdom values.

Division

1. The poor in spirit (v. 3)
2. Those who mourn (v. 4)
3. The meek (v. 5)
4. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v. 6)
5. The merciful (v. 7)
6. The pure in heart (v. 8)
7. The peacemakers (v. 9)
8. The persecuted (vv. 10–12)

Keep in mind

“Blessed” is the most important word in the Beatitudes and has everything to do with how we understand and apply each one. It is well worth doing a word study on this. R. T. France writes:

“Blessed” is a misleading translation of *makarios*, which does not denote one whom God blesses (which would be *eulogētos*, reflecting Heb. *bārûk*) but represents the Hebrew *’ašrê*, “fortunate,” and is used, like *’ašrê*, almost entirely in the formal setting of a beatitude. It introduces someone who is to be congratulated, someone whose place in life is an enviable one. “Happy” is better than “blessed,” but only if used not of

a mental state but of a condition of life. “Fortunate” or “well off” is less ambiguous. It is not a psychological description but a recommendation.¹

Bible dictionaries can be a great resource for unpacking the word “blessed” even further. (A great option is the [Lexham Bible Dictionary](#)—free with the [Logos Bible study app](#).)

Quotes and illustrations

Here are a few illustrations you may find useful. I found these by searching “meekness” and “purity” in the [Logos Sermon Starter Guide](#).

1. A general illustration on the Beatitudes may serve you in introducing the series:

This illustration records how the famous philosopher Émile Cailliet searched far and wide for a book that would understand him, that would reflect the human condition as it really is. He could find no such book until “by chance” his wife happened upon a Bible. He describes what happened next:

I literally grabbed the book and rushed to my study with it. I opened it and “chanced” upon the Beatitudes. I read and read and read—now aloud with an indescribable warmth surging within. ... I could not find words to express my awe and wonder. And suddenly the realization dawned upon me: This was the Book that would understand me! I needed it so much, yet, unaware, I had attempted to write my own—in vain. I continued to read deeply into the night, mostly from the Gospels. And lo and behold, as I looked through them, the one of whom they spoke, the one who spoke and acted in them, became alive in me.²

You can use this illustration to explain how the Beatitudes are a portal into the deeper questions of human existence. Simple yet profound, they meet us where we always live: on earth yet at eternity’s edge.

2. On meekness and humility (v. 5):

When the corn is nearly ripe, it bows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are nearly ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying than in the days of their first profession. The longer a saint grows in the

¹ R. T. France, [Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary](#), Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 1 (InterVarsity, 1985), 114.

² Émile Cailliet, quoted in Jeff Cornwell, “The Importance of Examining the Scriptures, Acts 17:10–15,” *Franklin United Church* (blog), April 19, 2009.
<https://www.franklinunitedchurch.com/2009/04/19/the-importance-of-examining-the-scriptures-acts-1710-15/>.

world, the better he is still acquainted with his own heart, and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things.³

3. On purity of heart (v. 8), one humorous and one pithy:

The teacher was checking her student's knowledge of proverbs. "Cleanliness is next to what?" she asked. A small boy replied with real feeling: "Impossible."⁴

Someone has said: "It is not enough for a gardener to love flowers; he must also hate weeds."⁵

Resources

- **Three popular commentaries on Matthew:**
 1. France, R. T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. New International Commentary on the Bible. Eerdmans, 2007.
 2. Carson, D. A. *Matthew*. *Expositor's Bible Commentary* 8. Zondervan, 1984.
 3. Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison Jr. *Matthew*. International Critical Commentary. 3 vols. T&T Clark, 1988–1991.
- **Colin Smith, *Momentum: Pursuing God's Blessings through the Beatitudes* (Moody, 2016)**

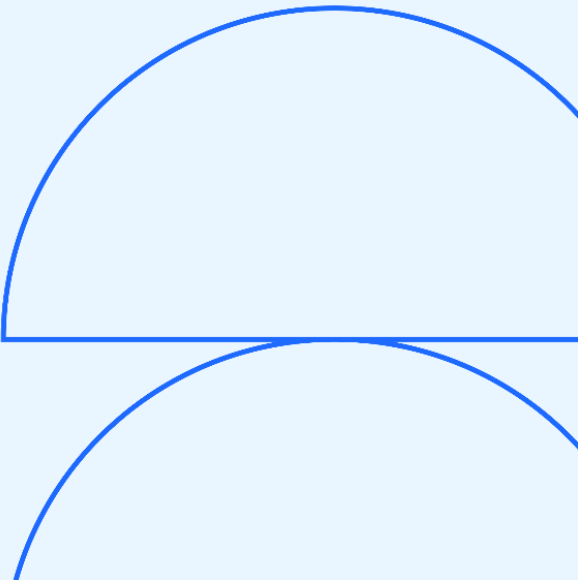
Smith argues that the Beatitudes are linked together with order and intention, such that Christians gain momentum as they grow in each subsequent virtue.

³ Elliot Ritzema and Elizabeth Vince, eds., *300 Quotations for Preachers from the Puritans*, Pastorum Series (Lexham, 2013).

⁴ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Bible Communications, 1996), 1106.

⁵ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, 1106.

Little Letters



What to do with all those New Testament letters that are just a few chapters long? Why not work through them in the gaps between your longer series?

Why this series?

The shorter epistles in the Bible—most of the ones treated here are three chapters or fewer—are ideal because you can preach through any of them in a matter of weeks. You could preach Philemon or Jude in a single morning, if you wanted to.

A Little Letters series is especially ideal for the summer, because the letters are usually thematically focused. Philemon is about reconciliation, Jude false teaching, 1 Timothy watching your life and doctrine. So with each, you can say something like, “For the next few weeks, we are going to focus on [theme] by studying [letter].” It’s a bite-sized series people can quickly wrap their heads around.

Division

A quick way to find letter divisions is to consult commentaries with outlines of the book.

I highly recommend Warren Wiersbe’s *The Bible Exposition Commentary* for finding simple outlines. Each one contains the letter’s key theme, key passage, and a high-level outline. For example, here’s 1 Thessalonians.⁶

Key theme: The coming of Christ for the church

Key verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10

1. PAUL REMEMBERS (chaps. 1–3)

- a. How the church was born (chap. 1)
- b. How the church was nurtured (chap. 2)
- c. How the church was established (chap. 3)

2. PAUL EXHORTS (chaps. 4–5)

The church should walk in:

- a. Holiness (4:1–8)
- b. Harmony (4:9–10)
- c. Honesty (4:11–12)
- d. Hope (4:13–5:11)
- e. Helpfulness (5:12–28)

⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Victor, 1996), 155.

If you wanted, you could condense chapters 4–5 into one or two weeks of preaching for a brief series.

***Note:** If you are considering purchasing Wiersbe’s commentary, consider the [2025 Baptist Bronze Library](#), which includes the commentary along with dozens more books, but is only a little over double the price of the commentary.

Keep in mind

One temptation with the letters is to think they were written to us. They weren’t. As Bible professor John Walton likes to say, “The Bible wasn’t written to us, but it was written for us.”⁷ Take care to note who the original recipient(s) of each letter is and how that intended addressee informs meaning. Beyond what the letter itself says about its original audience, you can learn more about them in commentary introductions.

Quotes and Illustrations

Because recurring themes in these letters are doctrine, fellowship, and the gospel, here is a quote or illustration for each.

On doctrine:

He that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.

—Jonathan Edwards⁸

On fellowship:

When the International Congress on World Evangelization met at Lausanne in 1974, it stressed the social implications of the gospel, as well as man’s personal need to trust Christ.

In one of the major conference addresses, Sr. Michael Green said, “Evangelism is the Church’s first priority. . . . But you cannot isolate the preaching of good news without

⁷ This is a popular abridged form of a statement by John H. Walton in his *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (InterVarsity Academic, 2009), 7. The original statement reads: “The Old Testament *does* communicate to us and it was written for us, and for all humankind. But it was not written *to* us.”

⁸ Ritzema and Vince, *300 Quotations*.

destroying the good news itself. ... The end of Acts 5 brings us almost to a revival situation in Jerusalem ... and then comes Acts 6 with a little matter of social justice and fellowship. They could have so easily brushed it aside and said, 'Don't fuss about the widows: Let's get on with the preaching. That is what matters.' If they had done that, God's Spirit would have been grieved, the fellowship would have been ruined."

—*Bible Expositor*⁹

On the gospel:

In the southern seas an American vessel was attacked by a wounded whale. The huge monster ran out for the length of a mile from the ship, turned around, and with the whole force of its acquired speed struck the ship and made it leak at every timber, so as to begin to go down. The sailors got out all their boats, filled them as quickly as they could with the necessities of life, and began to pull away from the ship. Just then, two strong men might be seen leaping into the water. They swam to the vessel, leapt on board, disappeared for a moment, and then came up, bringing something in their hands. Just as they sprang into the sea, down went the vessel, and they were carried around in the vortex, but they were observed to be both of them swimming, not as if struggling to get away, but as if looking for something, which at last they both seized and carried to the boats.

What was this treasure? What article could be so valued as to lead them to risk their lives? It was the ship's compass, which had been left behind—without which they could not have found their way out of those lonely southern seas into the high road of commerce.

That compass was life to them, and the gospel of the living God is the same to us. You and I must venture all for the gospel; this infallible Word of God must be guarded to the death. Men may tell us what they please, and say what they will, but we will risk everything sooner than give up those eternal principles by which we have been saved. The Lord gives all of us his abundant grace that we may take fast hold of divine instruction.

—Charles Spurgeon¹⁰

⁹ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, 386.

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon, "The Hold Fast," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 24 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1878), 336. Spurgeon is here referring to the sinking of the American whaleship *Essex* in the southern Pacific Ocean on November 20, 1820, when a provoked eighty-five-foot bull sperm whale rammed it twice. This is the earliest and most devastating case of a sperm whale attacking a human vessel. By Spurgeon's day, it was the most famous tragedy at sea before the sinking of the *RMS Titanic* in 1912. The sinking of the *Essex* would inspire Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* (1851).

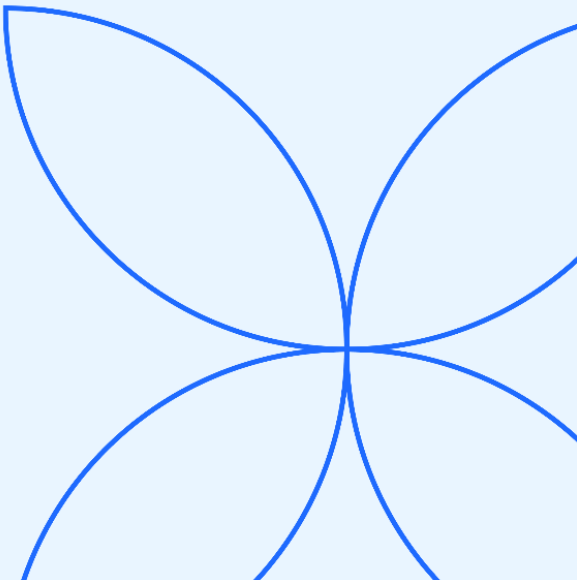
Resources

The DIY Bible Study guides, free with the [Logos Bible study app](#), are a great first step for grasping the basics of a letter quickly. They also include high-level outlines of each book.

For deeper study, consider the following:

1. [Top commentaries for each book](#)
2. Davids, Peter H. [*A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude: Living in the Light of the Coming King*](#). Biblical Theology of the New Testament. Zondervan, 2014.
3. Derickson, Gary. [*An Exegetical Theology of 1–3 John*](#). Lexham Press, 2017.
4. deSilva, David A. [*Transformation: The Heart of Paul's Gospel*](#). Lexham Press, 2014.
5. Köstenberger, Andreas J. [*A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*](#). Biblical Theology of the New Testament. Zondervan, 2009.

Letters from John



John's three letters, focused primarily on love, goodness, and unity, are refreshing and beautiful letters for the church.

Why this series?

As with the Little Letters series, of which 1–3 John could be a subset, this series is bite-sized yet packs a punch. In many ways the theological compendium to the Gospel of John, John's letters detail what it means to believe in Christ, uphold the truth, and practice love.

Division

Consult commentaries for various takes on the divisions of John's letters. For an especially high-level overview, here is how Warren Wiersbe divides the letters in his [*Bible Exposition Commentary*](#).¹¹

1 John

Key theme: The tests of reality in the Christian life

Key verse: 1 John 5:13

1. **Introduction (1:1–4)**
2. **The tests of true fellowship: God is light (1:5–2:29)**
 - a. Obedience (1:5–2:6)
 - b. (“saying” vs. “doing”)
 - c. Love (2:7–17)
 - d. Truth (2:18–29)
3. **The tests of true sonship: God is love (chaps. 3–5)**
 - a. Obedience (chap. 3)
 - b. Love (chap. 4)
 - c. Truth (chap. 5)

2 John

Key theme: Loving and living the truth

Key verse: 2 John 4

1. **Introduction (vv. 1–3)**

¹¹ Wiersbe, [*Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), 473, 533, 541.

2. **Practicing the truth** (vv. 4–6)
3. **Protecting the truth** (vv. 7–11)
4. **Conclusion** (vv. 12–13)

3 John

Key theme: Having a good witness in the church

Key verse: 3 John 3

1. **Gaius, a beloved believer** (vv. 1–8)
2. **Diotrephes, a proud believer** (vv. 9–10)
3. **Demetrius, an exemplary believer** (vv. 11–12)
4. **Conclusion** (vv. 13–14)

Keep in mind

The purpose and context of John's Epistles is important, as they concern particular events in a particular church. Here is Colin Kruse's commentary on this background:

The Letters of John provide readers with a cameo of life in one part of the early Church. They represent an unhappy time in the life of the Christian communities involved; a time of dispute between believers involving both theological and behavioral [sic] concerns. The letters reflect only one side of this dispute, but the side [that] represented the truth of the matter as far as the later Church was concerned.

The three letters appear to be interrelated, all dealing with one aspect or another of this dispute [...] Some of the members had taken on board certain beliefs about the person and work of Christ that were unacceptable to the author of the letters [John] and those associated with him. These new beliefs involved a denial that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, come in the flesh (1 John 4:2–3), and that his death was necessary for the forgiveness of sins (1 John 5:6–7). A sharp disagreement arose which resulted in the secession of those who embraced these new views (1 John 2:19).

The secessionists [...] were not content to keep their new beliefs to themselves. Instead they organized a group of itinerant preachers who circulated among the churches and propagated their beliefs with a view to winning people over to their understanding of things (1 John 2:26; 4:1–3; 2 John 7). This created confusion among the believers who remained loyal to the gospel as it had been proclaimed at the beginning, the gospel that had come down from the eyewitnesses. As a result of the confusion, these believers began to question whether they really knew God, whether

they really were experiencing eternal life, and whether they were really in the truth. The author of 1 John wrote to bolster the assurance of such people by providing them with criteria they could use to evaluate the claims being made by the secessionists and with which they could reassure themselves that they were in the truth (1 John 1:5–2:2; 2:3–11; 3:7–10, 14–15; 4:4–6, 7–8, 13–15; 5:13, 18–20). This letter appears to have been sent as a circular letter to the churches affected by the mission of the secessionists.¹²

Quotes and illustrations

With how frequently love, goodness, and truth appear in these letters, here are quotes and illustrations you may find useful.

On love (especially fitting for 1 John 5:2–4):

Love makes obedience a thing of joy!
To do the will of one we like to please
Is never hardship, though it tax our strength;
Each privilege of service love will seize!

Love makes us loyal, glad to do or go,
And eager to defend a name or cause;
Love takes the drudgery from common work,
And asks no rich reward or great applause.

Love gives us satisfaction in our task,
And wealth in learning lessons of the heart;
Love sheds a light of glory on our toil
And makes us humbly glad to have a part.

Love makes us choose to do the will of God,
To run His errands and proclaim his truth;
It gives our hearts an eager, lilting song;
Our feet are shod with tireless wings of youth!

—Hazel Hartwell Simon¹³

On goodness:

The confession of evil works is the beginning of good works.

¹² Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Eerdmans, 2000), 1–3.

¹³ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, 762.

—St. Augustine of Hippo

On truth (especially useful for 1 John 2:1–11):

Nothing conquers but truth, and the victory of truth is love.

—St. Augustine of Hippo

Truth and the hatred of truth come into our world together. As soon as truth appears, it is regarded as an enemy.

—Tertullian of Carthage

Nothing causes truth to blush, except only being hidden, because no man will be ashamed to give ear to it.

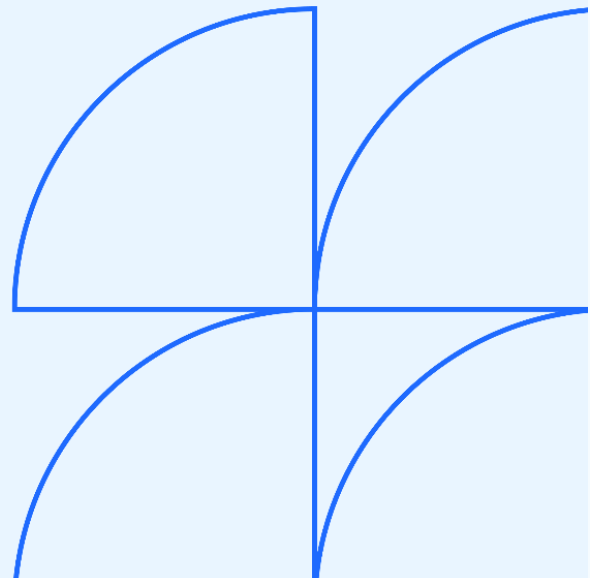
—Tertullian of Carthage

Resources

Consult these three top commentaries on John's Epistles:

1. Kruse, Colin G. *The Letters of John*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Eerdmans, 2000.
2. Marshall, Howard. *The Epistles of John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Eerdmans, 1978.
3. Stott, John. *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 19. InterVarsity Press, 1988.

Minor Prophets



The Minor Prophets might be the most neglected literary group in the Bible, yet they contain powerful messages about God’s judgment, faithfulness, and hope—as well as many passages that contain specific prophecies about Jesus.

Why this series?

As with others, the Minor Prophets are ideal for a short series because they stand well on their own. You could preach Obadiah in one morning, and if someone missed it, they would be able to understand Jonah just fine if you were to start on it the next week.

Additionally, there is a nice variety in the Minor Prophets. You’ll find themes of repentance and confession, hope, faithfulness, love, and more—as well as memorable images, like God in his judgment being like an attacking bear (Lam 3:10).¹⁴

Division

The [DIY Bible Study guides](#) provide wonderful high-level breakdowns of each prophet. If you’d like to get more granular and gather other opinions, consult commentaries.

You may decide to divide your series by where and when the prophets ministered:

Israel’s Classical Prophets

	Prophets to Israel	Prophets to Judah
Assyrian Period	Jonah (785–775)	Isaiah (740–681)
	Amos (760–750)	Micah (735–690)
	Hosea (750–715)	
Babylonian Period		Zephaniah (630–620)
		Nahum (630)
		Habakkuk (620)
		Jeremiah (627–580)

¹⁴ Though not technically a Minor Prophet, given its placement in the English Bible and its historical alignment with the Prophets, Lamentations may be included in this series.

Persian Period		Obadiah (600?)
		Ezekiel (593–570)
		Haggai (520)
		Zechariah (520–518)
		Joel (500)
		Malachi (450–430)

Keep in mind

The Prophets are rich with imagery—preach the imagery! As you know, one task of the preacher is to awaken not just the mind but also the senses to God’s Word. Engaging the imagination is key, and almost nothing engages the imagination like a powerful image. Resist the temptation to turn the poetry into propositions, and instead preach the poetry itself. As the late Eugene Peterson said:

All the prophets were poets. And if you don’t know that, you try to literalize everything and make shambles out of it. A metaphor is really a remarkable kind of formation, because it both means what it says and what it doesn’t say. And so those two things come together, and it creates an imagination which is active. You’re not trying to figure things out; you’re trying to enter into what’s there.¹⁵

Quotes and Illustrations

With themes of wrath, judgment, and hope abundant in the Prophets, here are a few quotes and illustrations you may find fitting.

On wrath:

It is clear that when we think of the word “wrath” as applicable to God, it must be divested of everything that is like human passion, and especially the passion of revenge. It is one of the most obvious rules of interpretation that we are not to apply to God passions and feelings which, among us, have their origin in evil. [God’s wrath] is the opposition of the divine character against sin; and the determination of the divine

¹⁵ Krista Tippet, host, *On Being*, episode 1,050, “Eugene Peterson—Answering God,” On Being Studios, December 22, 2016, podcast, 51 mins, <https://onbeing.org/programs/eugene-peterson-answering-god/>.

mind to express that opposition in a proper way, by excluding the offender from the favors which He bestows on the righteous. We admire the character of a father who is opposed to disorder, vice, and disobedience in his family, and who expresses his opposition in a proper way. We admire the character of a ruler who is opposed to all crime in the community, and who expresses those feelings in the law. Why shall we not be equally pleased with God, who is opposed to all crime in all parts of the universe, and who determines to express His opposition in the proper way for the sake of preserving order and promoting peace?

—Albert Barnes¹⁶

On hope:

Whatsoever our condition be, let us never limit God. God's people should never be better, the times were never worse. Where we be bad, God is good. Times are bad, God is good. He can alter all. When there is no hope of escaping, no likely issue, God can make it good.

—Richard Sibbes¹⁷

On judgment:

Death, and judgment, and eternity are not fancies but stern realities. Make time to think about them. Stand still, and look them in the face. You will be obliged one day to make time to die, whether you are prepared or not.

—J. C. Ryle¹⁸

Resources

- The [DIY Bible Study guides](#), available free in the [Logos Bible app](#) on desktop, web, and mobile.
- Explore the [best Minor Prophet commentaries](#) on Logos.
- **Tip:** Get your commentaries in Logos for better integration with your Bible study and sermon preparation.
- [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#). InterVarsity Press, 1988. “An encyclopedic exploration of the images, symbols, motifs, metaphors, figures of speech and literary patterns of the Bible.”

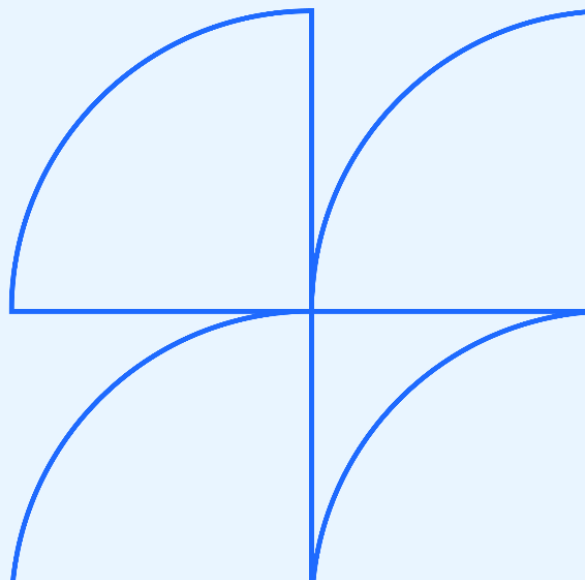
¹⁶ Galaxie Software, “Wrath,” in [10,000 Sermon Illustrations](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Ritzema and Vince, [300 Quotations](#).

¹⁸ Ritzema and Vince, [300 Quotations](#).

- Alan, Richard, and Gary Yates. *The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets*. B&H Academic, 2016.

Psalms



The book of Psalms is the hymnal of God's people, the prayers and meditations of the faithful. The book of Psalms holds a treasured place in the life of the church.

Why this series?

Psalms are ideal for a short series because, for the most part, they are not interconnected. Thus, you have self-contained literary units to preach from. You could just as easily do a three-week series on the Psalms as a ten-week one.

Additionally, there is great variety to them. The emotions range from sorrow to joy, penitence to thanksgiving, anger to humility. They venture into every corner of the human condition.

Division

The book of Psalms is divided into five books, so you may choose to preach from one psalm in each.

Another option I recommend is to preach one of each "type" of psalm. There are different ways of categorizing them and some overlap, but broadly they are considered:

- Praise psalms
- Lament psalms
- Imprecatory psalms
- Special-occasion psalms
- Royal (or messianic)¹⁹ psalms
- Songs of Ascent (or pilgrimage psalms)

The list below is more detailed, dividing the main categories into narrower ones. I've highlighted the primary types in case you'd prefer to choose from those.

Types of Psalms²⁰

Type	Description	Psalm
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¹⁹ *Messianic* does not necessarily refer to a psalm with a prediction or particular detail foreshadowing Jesus Christ, although this is often the case. For example, Psalm 22 is a lament psalm but contains obvious foreshadows to Christ's suffering, yet it is not strictly speaking a royal psalm, since kingship language is not its primary feature.

²⁰ Adapted from John D. Barry, ed., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lexham, 2012, 2016), with the addition of "Imprecatory Psalms."

Enthronement	A psalm that celebrates God's kingship	24, 47, 93; 96–99
Imprecatory	A psalm asking for God's judgment to fall upon one's enemy or enemies	5, 17, 28, 35, 40, 55, 59, 70, 71, 79, 80, 94, 129, 137, 139
Historical	A type of praise psalm that recounts God's actions throughout history	78, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136
Corporate lament	A cry to God from the community	12, 44, 58, 74, 80, 83, 94, 123, 126, 137
Individual lament	A cry to God from an individual	3, 6, 13, 16, 22, 31, 57, 56, 102, 142
Pilgrimage	A psalm intended to be sung on pilgrimage to Jerusalem	120–134
Royal or messianic	A psalm on behalf of the King	2, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132
Song of Zion	A psalm that focuses on Yahweh's presence in Jerusalem	46, 76, 84, 87, 122
Temple entry	A psalm intended to be sung as the worshiper enters the temple	15, 24, 26, 101
Confidence	A psalm that expresses trust in God's loyal love	16, 23, 52, 62, 91, 115, 121, 125, 131
Thanksgiving	A psalm intended to express gratitude to God	18, 21, 30, 34, 40, 92, 107, 118, 138, 144
Wisdom	A psalm that shows a similarity to Wisdom Literature	14, 36, 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133
Praise	A psalm intended to praise God for his attributes	8, 21, 33, 103, 111, 115, 135, 145–150

Keep in mind

There is great intention to the book of Psalms, not only how the book itself was put together but to each psalm itself:

Psalms were not spontaneous, free verse written for singular occasions but were carefully crafted liturgies written for recurring, typical human needs and for services of worship. The psalms formed an ancient prayer and hymn book. As *The Book of Common Prayer* contains regular liturgies in which all worshipers participate during the liturgical year, such as Morning Prayer, the Lord's Supper, and Easter Sunday, the book of Psalms contains liturgies, such as hymns and the Songs of Zion, that were performed at annual pilgrimage festivals, such as Passover, Feast of Weeks, and Tabernacles.²¹

Read more about the book of Psalms in the [Lexham Bible Dictionary](#), a free resource you can download in Logos.

Quotes and illustrations

Here are quotes and illustrations on primary themes in the Psalms, such as praise, thankfulness, and prayer.

On praise:

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness, and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself, to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing.

—William Law²²

On thankfulness:

O Thou whose bounty fills my cup,
With every blessing meet!
I give Thee thanks for every drop—
The bitter and the sweet.

²¹ Craig C. Broyles, "Psalms, Book of," in John D. Barry, ed., [Lexham Bible Dictionary](#) (Lexham, 2016).

²² Ritzema and Vince, [300 Quotations](#).

I praise Thee for the desert road,
And for the riverside;
For all Thy goodness hath bestowed,
And all Thy grace denied.

I thank Thee for both smile and frown,
And for the gain and loss;
I praise Thee for the future crown
And for the present cross.

I thank Thee for both wings of love
Which stirred my worldly nest;
And for the stormy clouds which drove
Me, trembling, to Thy breast.

I bless Thee for the glad increase,
And for the waning joy;
And for this strange, this settled peace
Which nothing can destroy.

—Christian Victory²³

On prayer:

My prayers seem to be more of an attitude than anything else. I indulge in no lip service, but ask the great God silently, daily, and often many times a day, to permit me to speak to him. I ask him to give me wisdom, understanding and bodily strength to do his will. Hence, I am asking and receiving all the time.

—George Washington Carver²⁴

I ask Christ for this one thing only, that he will enable me to endure all things courageously, and that he break me as a potter's vessel or make me strong, as it pleases him.

—Ulrich Zwingli²⁵

Resources

- [Top commentaries on Psalms](#)

²³ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, 1459.

²⁴ Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, 1042.

²⁵ Ritzema and Vince, *300 Quotations*.

- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. Fortress Press, 1984.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller. Fortress Press, 19

About Logos

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